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CURRENT OPINION

PEACE AND RECONSTRUCTION ISSUES

President McGiffert on the Christianizing of Democracy

The opinions of the distinguished church historian, Dr. A. C. McGiffert, President of Union Theological Seminary, on the much discussed relation of Christianity and democracy, are presented in the January number of the *Harvard Theological Review*. In this able article, Dr. McGiffert recalls the fact that it was only during the war, and not at its outset, that the contest between autocracy and democracy emerged, as the question of emancipation emerged after the opening of the Civil War. And just as the slavery question then became a moral one, through the "conscience of the North reading into it moral terms," whereas before it had been regarded as purely economic, so during the world-war there has taken place "the transfer of the age-long struggle between autocracy and democracy from the field of politics to the field of morals," which Dr. McGiffert regards as the most significant consequence of the war. Autocracy is seen to be not only accidentally but essentially bad. It denies human brotherhood with the "kinship, equality, and liberty which brotherhood involves." There has prevailed a conception of Christianity which denied the equality that obtained in the early church. In American democracy too there remains a tolerance of "economic autocracy," so long as it appears benevolent. "Similarly, so long as an employer is kind to his employees—building model cottages, providing free lunches, giving frequent bonuses and the like—he is acting the part of a Christian employer, even though he joins with others of his class in perpetuating the bondage of the wage-earner, and in hindering the growth of economic freedom." The result of the war in this connection is

to arouse a sentiment against economic autocracy, which is more and more to be regarded by the church as anti-Christian. The church has defined brotherhood in terms of benevolence; she now comes to define it in terms of democracy.

The notion of chosen nations is being repudiated, not only in the cruder form of election to privilege, but even in that of election to service, which involves an insistence on superiority. "Democracy is consistent only with the idea of a universal call." The new emphasis on democracy too will have its bearing on theology. God will be interpreted not as a Being who dominates and coerces men, but as eliciting in them the spirit that makes for brotherhood, and utilizing their needed co-operation. The preference of Tertullian for a bad rather than a weak God will not be acceptable; we shall give more regard to his character than to his power. And he will be such a God as to meet our highest ideals, "in worshiping whom we are at the summit of moral devotion and achievement."

A First Sketch of Industrial Reconstruction

Mr. Dudley Cates contributes to the *Journal of Political Economy* for January a timely "Preliminary Survey of Industrial Reconstruction." He attempts to divide the problem into its elements and to estimate the economic forces involved. The division of the subject adopted is (1) stimulation of a demand for the products of industry to take the place of government buying; (2) restoration of a normal price level; (3) conversion of industrial facilities from war to peace production; (4) absorption of labor released from war industries and from the military establishment.

The danger is pointed out of an exaggerated view of the export demand, and a neglect of the home markets. "Stimulation of effective domestic demand is the hope of the country." Industry has been stimulated to full activity during the war, producing few foreign needs. But after the war "demand must not be estimated on the basis of what the country is able to produce, but on what it is able to consume." At the same time the probable foreign demand should be carefully estimated, especially in regard to reconstruction in Europe, and the markets of South America and the Orient.

The control of prices is discussed, with suggestions to stabilize markets during the expected decline in prices. Minimum prices should be set, and these periodically lowered when the stocks on hand justify the reduction. Mr. Cates believes that serious unemployment in the transition period can be avoided by a careful program, including the stimulation of public works and the use of government agencies to classify sectional demands of labor in advance of the discharge of soldiers.

The Crimes of the Prison Camps

One of the most difficult problems to which the statesmen of the allied nations must give attention is that of assessing the blame for the hideous and unexampled atrocities suffered by prisoners in German prison camps. Archibald H. Sewell, a British army chaplain among the prisoners sent from Germany to be interned in Switzerland, contributes to the *Nineteenth Century and After* for December an astonishing tale of these horrors, under the title "The Hun and His Prisoners." The facts given are based upon accounts verified by conversations with large numbers of the unfortunate victims during a period of eighteen months. Having been shocked and saddened by the proofs of general ill treatment suffered by the men, he feels strongly that the people at home are too apathetic over the matter. The article con-

sists largely of appalling incidents of ingenious and cold-blooded cruelty, adding to the tale of previous reports of German atrocities. The German army surgeons seldom showed ordinary humanity, and when they did it was "as secretly as possible; it was obviously against orders." Most of them "seemed to revel in the infliction of misery." The guards in charge of the prisoners proved themselves bullies and cowards; an indignant show of resistance might suddenly transform the one into the other. Many of the survivors bear in their bodies and in broken nervous systems the marks of prolonged abuse.

British soldiers recently convoyed a food-train to Vienna, in gratitude for the comparatively humane treatment their prisoners had in Austria. But what will be the answer of enlightened nations to Germany's diabolism? Can the guilty be arraigned and punished?

The Best Planned of Revolutions

What impresses one on fuller acquaintance with the facts connected with the Czecho-Slovak assertion of independence, is that such extraordinary intelligence, purposefulness, and morale should have been exhibited by a people so long and so severely oppressed. The story is told with a great deal of intimacy by Mr. J. F. Smetanka, director of the Washington office of the Czecho-Slovak National Council, in the *World Court* for December. Mr. Smetanka's article, "The Rise of the Czecho-Slovak Independence," pays a high tribute to the leadership of Professor Masaryk, who is called the "Grand Old Man of Bohemia," and is credited with being "the one man who saw the war coming and knew what to do when it broke out." Instead of stirring a revolt which would have proved futile and disastrous, Masaryk determined to secure from the allied and American governments sanction of what amounted to the complete dismemberment of the Austrian Empire.

For three years the Czechs at home waited for the situation to arise that would force a surrender from the Austrian government, maintaining hope and purpose although their newspapers were made the mouthpieces of the government, and as the Reichsrat was not called, their deputies could not voice their aspirations in the councils of the empire. On every occasion on the eastern front, however, regiments were going over to the Russians, to become later the liberators of Siberia. When finally allied and American pressure without, and exhaustion within, forced the recognition by the government of the principle of self-determination, the revolution came in orderly fashion—only one Austrian officer being knocked down in the street in Prague. This most orderly of revolutions has resulted in the formation of a nation containing 54,000 square miles, with twelve millions of people, “stretching across the road from Berlin to Vienna.”

Christianity Outgrowing the Church

Can Christianity tolerate the church? is the question asked by Joseph Ernest McAfee in the *New Republic* for January 18. The question arises from the belief that the churches are undemocratic. Democracy tolerates the church because a *laissez faire* democracy can tolerate almost anything. But democracy has a real place for religion, and “religion, like every other universal human concern, must be brought under community control” in a thoroughgoing democracy. Christianity itself is not an institution but a spirit, and from its nature it must resist the confinement of institutional, sectarian, and hierarchical control. Christianity has been at its best historically, in attempts to escape from this custody, and expresses itself truly in Christian grocery stores and in Christian men, and possibly even in a Christian state, rather than in a so-called Christian church. An official Christian church is un-Christian; it should give place to community control.

In all this we find theory, not plan. When one comes to frame a plan for the change suggested, there is necessarily involved a community organization for religion to furnish means for its propagation and cultural processes. If ever the time comes when the “spirit” which is Christianity becomes so universal as to be self-conserving and self-propagating, church organization would be obsolete. Meanwhile indeed sectarianism may be abolished by the assertion of community interests. But this will mean assembling, not destroying, the machinery. It’s a long, long way to Utopia!

Views of the Peace Conference

Amid all the printed advice offered the peace commissioner’s meeting at Paris, few articles have gone more thoroughly into the principles to be considered than Sir Sidney Low’s contribution to the *Fortnightly Review* for December, on “The Conference of Nations.” The argument is that in all previous attempts to settle the affairs of Europe, the idea has been to secure a static rather than a dynamic result. At the close of each great war the nations have made their mutual vows of peace, and presently these vows have been violated. The underlying cause is not always deliberate wrong, but lies in the “excessive regard paid to the element of stability,” and a failure to provide for the changed conditions that may arise. Nature itself shows no fixity or immobility, but the diplomats have not learned from nature. This criticism is applied in turn to notable European peace settlements—Westphalia, Utrecht, and Vienna—in each of which there was a sincere but shortsighted attempt to secure permanent peace. The writer expresses the fear that the same ideas of finality will spoil the results of the present conference, and finds in President Wilson’s Fourteen Points no evidence of any other intention. “The assumption appears to be that when the diplomatists, the interna-

tional lawyers, the statisticians, the cartographers, and the boundary commissioners, have finished their work, we shall again have reached a stable condition which will be preserved by the perpetual peace." The plea is therefore advanced that the possibilities of future political changes should be taken into consideration. It should be frankly recognized that the settlement is provisional. Even national boundaries that now appear just may become obsolete, and economic and social may override national bonds of unity. "One can imagine that before very long an ironmonger in Belgrade may feel that he has more in common with another ironmonger in Budapest than with a pig-breeder in the Serbian highlands." The foresight that will make ample provision for future alterations will remove the cause of future irritations that might otherwise breed war.

The proceedings of the conference now being reported, in regard to the League of Nations, can be the better understood in the light of an article by David Jayne Hill, a former American Ambassador to Germany, "The Entente of Free Nations," which appears in the January *North American Review*. This writer is of the opinion that the subject of a League of Nations has received fuller discussion in Great Britain than in America, and points out that in both England and France national commissions have been at work preparing recommendations long before the end of the war. He controverts the opinions of certain English writers, that America is responsible for proposing a League of Nations, and denies that American soldiers fought for it or for President Wilson's Fourteen Points. Instead they were fighting *the Germans*, because the Germans were brutalizing mankind. It was a moral, not a legal motive. And the basis of future peace must lie, not so much in legal undertakings, as in the comradeship of the free nations in a holy cause. A strictly documentary form of engagement is inadequate. What must be maintained is the

"Entente," the "Great Understanding" among the victors.

Service and Claims of Oriental Peoples

We have been so engrossed with the military and political issues of Europe in recent months, and so conscious of the overshadowing part played by the western nations, that we have almost overlooked the minor but important rôles of the Orient in achieving victory, as well as the oriental interests in peace. St. Nihal Singh recounts the war services of the Asiatic peoples to the allied cause, in an article on "The War and the East" which appears in the *London Quarterly Review* for January. These services have been overlooked, he tells us, because "Orientals have not yet mastered the art of advertising themselves." The Japanese navy convoyed Australian troops to Europe, and, besides protecting the Pacific waters, materially aided Russia. China, though late entering the war, gave large assistance in labor from the first, sending her laborers to the theaters of war. Siam, on no motive but gratitude for the protection of the great nations, sent soldiers, her aviators especially distinguishing themselves. Indian troops came loyally to Britain's aid, and fought in more theaters of war than those of any British dominion. Their especial service was in Palestine and in Mesopotamia. Great Britain in return pledged herself to promote "the gradual development of self-governing institutions," looking toward responsible government in India. The aspirations of the Eastern peoples must be carefully studied with a view, not to foreign domination, but to giving the East the opportunity of self-expression, that it may in turn make new contributions to the world's cultural life.

General Smuts Welcomes American Co-operation

General Christian Smuts, once a Boer leader, now high in the councils of the British Empire and a liberal internationalist, is

reported in the *World Court* for December in a particularly happy address to American editors in London. "Old Europe is dead," says the general, "and a new world-order is slowly emerging." He regards the co-operation of America and Great Britain as the best guarantee for the future development of civilization. Together, and associated with other members of the coming League of Nations, they must undertake, not only to prevent war, but to relieve want wherever it occurs. International machinery will be necessary to ration all countries, allied, neutral, and enemy, for a period after the war. The small but bitter minorities in the newly formed nations of Europe will constitute a danger that must be met. He anticipates that some of the German colonies will go to the British Dominions which conquered them, others will be internationalized. The miracle of South African loyalty to Great Britain may be repeated even in enemy countries, and the bitterness of the war lead to a great reconciliation of peoples.

How the Profit System Damages Christianity

A suggestive article appears in that readable year-old monthly, *The World Tomorrow*, January number. It is by Richard Roberts on "Christianity and the Profit System." Christianity, Mr. Roberts believes, showed symptoms of arrest in its functioning for years before the war, and this does not seem to have been affected by the experience which war has brought; indeed it has been rendered more pronounced by what is called "Christian advocacy of a sub-Christian platform." If the validity of this sub-Christian attitude to war be admitted, why not admit also the validity of a sub-Christian attitude to the social order? The roots of the war itself lay in the social order, and there also lie the causes of the arrest of Christianity. The perverseness of the social order has made consistent Christianity impossible for business men, minis-

ters have preached a gospel of the second best, and organized Christianity has declined into a cultus. Only profound changes in the social order can release Christianity again from the confinement imposed upon it by the economic system. Christianity flourishes only among the *bourgeoisie*, who possess economic security. Among the classes subjected to the distresses of insecurity, resulting from fluctuations of markets and caprice of employers, the only type of Christianity that makes headway is the salvationist type, with its emphasis upon assurance of compensation in eternity. Failing allworldly hopes, otherworldly hopes predominate in this type of religion, and preoccupation with these inhibits any interest in a Christian world-order. Life is lived monotonously, yet strenuously. Its domination by machine-industry gives a passionate demand for excitement, while its rapid intensity causes nerve-exhaustion. The former fact leads to an interest in the sensational in religion, the latter to a falling back upon religious anodynes like Christian Science. So the whole environment of life is deadly to Christian impulse.

Among the chief causes of the whole trouble Mr. Roberts places the profit system. The pursuit of profit tends to lower wages and to heighten the cost of living. It is often responsible for a manipulation of production, and through labor being treated as a commodity there has been produced a reserve of labor in unemployment, which means insecurity for those employed. What is needed is not so much a more equitable distribution of wealth as a more equitable distribution of freedom and security. The whole result is to arrest Christianity, and the system constitutes the "chains of Christ" in the modern world.

We believe Mr. Roberts is here touching vital problems. But to assume that true Christianity can be restrained in this way is the depth of pessimism. If it be true, then we are undone. But perhaps the con-

tinuation of this wrong system is a result rather more than a cause of the arrest of Christianity. Christ cannot be chained. And if the church is Christian she will assail and overthrow and with consecrated intelligence replace the outworn social system, not merely that an "arrested" Christianity may flourish, but that humanity may advance.

Fallen Leaders

No recently deceased American leaders will be more greatly missed than Walter Rauschenbusch and Theodore Roosevelt. The former from a professorial chair acquired a large reputation—a comparatively rare achievement; while the latter's brilliant and versatile gifts fitted him rather for a popular rôle. The *Homiletic Review* for February prints an appreciation of Professor Rauschenbusch from the pen of Dr. Paul Moore Strayer, of Rochester, New York. It was his service, says Dr. Strayer, to "point out the place of the social gospel in the very heart of the Bible, and in the life and practice of the church." He gave attention to the history of his subject, and was historian as well as crusader, showing in his works that "those who departed from the social gospel were reactionaries against the great Catholic spirit of religion." One of the advantages he possessed in obtaining a wide influence was his mastery of style—a gift which he deliberately cultivated. "In the field of Christian Sociology he is what Professor William James is in his treatment of psychology and philosophy." He carried into his professional work the enthusiasm and directness which he had shown in his ministry of eleven years to the German tenement dwellers of New York City, and remained sensitive to the inequalities and injustices suffered by the poor. He often, in open forum, disarmed the hostility of agitators and reactionaries, with his sheer frankness and *naïveté*. The victim of growing deafness, he endeavored to maintain his full connection with the world of affairs, attending

public lectures which he could not hear, but getting their contents in manuscript from some companion. He was a great worker, but equally enthusiastic at play; he spent his vacations mostly in Canada, and enjoyed aquatic pastimes with his children. Much of his influence was due to his genius for friendship. "Especially he was a powerful influence among the younger ministers of the gospel in every democratic land. His is the most far-reaching voice on the social question today."

Since the death of Theodore Roosevelt on January 6, great quantities of printed matter have appeared in the daily press, setting forth his virtues and achievements, and now articles of the sort are appearing in the standard magazines. We turn to the *Outlook* for January 15 for the personal reflections of Dr. Lyman Abbot, long the ex-President's friend and associate. The impressions that are uppermost in Dr. Abbot's thought, as he writes on the day of Roosevelt's death, credit him with greater influence than even Abraham Lincoln in "expediting the era of self-government." As a politician it was his ambition not to govern but to lead. Finely democratic, his tests of character were not conventional, but were the common virtues "courage, frankness, political honesty, personal purity." His messages to Congress dealt with the moral principles of government; and when accused of preaching, he confessed that he had a "bully pulpit." His latest appeal to the nation, aiming to secure at once fair consideration for immigrants and undivided allegiance from them, illustrates his "passion for even-handed justice." He has done much, in Dr. Abbot's opinion, to take from politics the associations of dishonor given to it in the popular mind; for "his life proved that the highest success is possible to honor courage and purity." The force and magnetism of his personality are illustrated in incidents recalled by Lawrence F. Abbot, in the same issue. Among others is given the testimony of a London throat

specialist who attended Mr. Roosevelt. This distinguished physician stated that ordinarily in treating patients he gave something out of himself that left him exhausted; but his experience in treating Roosevelt was the reverse: "A sense of new vitality came out of him into me."

Of all the brief tributes sent by telegraph or cable to his bereaved family, we quote one of the briefest and most discerning, from Rudyard Kipling: "It is as though Bunyan's Mr. Greatheart had died in the midst of his pilgrimage, for he was the greatest proved American of our generation."

Nestor of Positivism Hails the New Era

In *Current History* for January appears by arrangement with the *London Chronicle* an eloquent presentation of the hopes of the times, from the pen of Frederic Harrison, entitled "The Dawn of a New Era." Mr. Harrison writes "as a very old man who has long been a student of history," and recounts the "stormy stages" of modern democratic progress from the First French Republic to the last "four years of superhuman strain." Especially notable is the contrast between the world of the writer's boyhood and the world of today. "In these eighty-seven years the change has been as great as in the seven hundred years since Magna Charta." In the struggle now ended nearly half the human race have passed from despotism to republics. The *rapprochement* between Britain and France, and above all between Britain and America, together with the comradeship in arms of some twenty different peoples, constitutes a vastly important change. And humanity coming to its long-desired peace and union is at the same time enriched with formerly undreamed of "inventions to use and control the material earth." The reader of the article will add his own delight to find a man so aged retain such youthful ardor for life, and sympathy with the renewed youth of humanity.

The Revival of the Russian Church

The Orthodox church of Russia is being reborn as a result of the tragic experiences of the war and revolution. Ariadna Tyrkova (Mrs. Harold Williams) tells the story of its transformation in successive articles in the *New Europe* for September. Before the war the Orthodox church lacked spirituality, was quiescent and submissive to the state. The men of culture were indifferent or hostile to the church and belonged to the ranks of the rationalists or positivists. However, there was always an idealistic school among the cultured of Russia, though their work in the Societies of Religions Philosophy was scorned and ridiculed. This idealistic group included such men as Vladimir Soloviev and Prince E. Trubetzkoy, of the University of Moscow. These were the men prepared to take charge of the reformation of the church when the disorder of the Bolshevik régime made it necessary. The violence and crime, the reckless atheism, and cruelty, of the Bolsheviks were vented upon the church. In the time of the ultimate testing the real spiritual power of the old orthodoxy sprang to life, and out of the welter of agony came a new spirit. The people of Russia who had been utterly indifferent to the church rallied to support and to defend her. The Patriarch Tikhon alone dared to denounce the Bolsheviks. Him alone they do not dare to kill. He has become a symbolical figure around whom Russian patriots are grouping. The church has been robbed but she has entered upon a new and greater spiritual wealth. The Russian millions, in their terrible sufferings and loss, are crowding to the foot of the cross. Prominent laymen are entering the church. The old exclusiveness of official routine is broken. The church is once more a community of believers. Parishioners meet with the priests to discuss church and secular affairs. Laymen are allowed to give addresses in the church, especially after the vespers,

which is the most intimate of all Russian services. Distinguished scholars and public workers are taking part in the church council. The intelligent youth of Russia has come out of the war with a deepened spiritual sense and a new respect for traditional values. It is inevitable that all these elements will result in a union of the *intelligentsia* and the people. When the real Democracy of Russia shall have come out of the furnace of affliction, the Russian church will be a more potent factor in the nation than it has been for the last two hundred years.

Danger to American Democracy

Many voices have been raised in protest against the suppression of the rights of the individual and the crushing of real democratic criticism and free discussion which has been applied presumably as a war measure. The *New Republic* for December 7 points out that the real reason for Bolshevik violence lies in the attitude of mind of the conservative elements of society in the impatient intolerance of opposition and of discriminating discussion. Before our entrance into the war the American social and political structure was supposed to rest upon the vitality of public opinion secured by the ventilation of popular grievances, the clash of opposing views, and freedom of public utterance. During the war the conservative created a state of public mind which secured unity, not by honest discussion, but by bullying and terrorizing all objectors. If this is continued they will force the America people ultimately to choose between a capitalist or proletarian dictatorship. "They will deprive the politics back of conservation and progress from the nourishment of a democratic faith and a democratic method." The final test of that faith and method is now coming. If the same methods are used to suppress the dictatorship of the proletariat as were used to suppress Prussianism it will involve the

ruin of America democracy. "Kaiserism was the expression of an inhuman greed for power. Bolshevism is the perverted child of popular distress, political and industrial violence, and industrial and social frustration. Organized society cannot suppress it for long because it thrives on suppression just as Christianity thrived under persecution. All that it can do is honestly to try to accomplish by democratic methods and without violence the revolutionary improvements in the condition of the poor and the dispossessed that Bolshevism is attempting to accomplish by violence." The great enemy and the great danger at present is not Bolshevism but reaction and dissension. In America the reactionaries are striving to create dissension and to cultivate a state of mind which will block the way to radical yet orderly democratic progress.

The Loss of Liberty

The *Unpopular Review* for October-December joins in the protest against the apathetic way in which America is slowly surrendering individual liberty. The decline of interest in the preservation of liberty dates from long before the war. Its chief cause is a growing emphasis upon immediate material benefit to multitudes of men—the growth of utilitarian humanitarianism. It is vain to rest in ease because America is a democracy, for democracies can be tyrannical as well as any other form of government. The supine way in which the individual submitted to the various restrictions and commands during the war without any criticism or examination of their wisdom is an alarming symptom. It is this atrophy which is most serious. There is a tendency to make the "will of the people" a divine and unlimited authority invested with the sacred spell which attached to the will of the king who ruled by divine right. In the period of reconstruction it is possible that such carelessness of liberty for the individual may result in the loss of

real democracy. In the past it was surely the conviction of the majority of Americans that the Christian religion is essential to virtue and the noblest life; yet it would have been unthinkable that this good should be attained by the compelling power of the state. What forms the encroachment upon liberty and individuality may take in the near future is not clear. They will of course be made on the plea of the public good. But *salus populi* may be and has been used to justify red terror. In America there will be no red terror, "but there may easily be a pale despotism far more lasting than any red terror can be. The only defense against it is the cherishing of the principle of liberty, not merely the principle of democracy that the people shall be sovereign, but the principle of liberty that no sovereign, be he one-headed or many-headed, shall be abjectly worshiped." Unless the present generation stand guard against this steady compulsion, the next age will grow up in a world from which liberty has flown and be unconscious of the loss. Our world is the world of liberty and individuality. "What shall it profit the world if it gain a thousand 'betterments' and lose its soul?"

The Larger Self

The case for the larger self to which the individual must submit and to which he must be oriented if he is to come to his full power and happiness is presented by Professor J. Dashiell Stoops in the October number of the *International Journal of Ethics*. People who still think in terms of eighteenth-century individualism must feel that the individual is limited by the growth of institutions. The interpretation of man in terms of biological psychology seems to

such a mind to limit, subordinate, even to annul, human freedom and individuality. But the exact opposite is true. It is only through the individual's functioning in a complex group that the differentiating of a specialized will is made possible. Elasticity and individuality have been made possible for man only because the increased survival value of the group life permitted individual variation. We must realize that the self is not volition and reason alone but this based on a deep instinctive nature which links the individual to the race and to the world. "The family, the state, the world of industry and religion, are not the product of the 'individual' reason; they are the product of the reason interpreting and directing the deeper racial instincts." The true understanding of the self is to see in the instinctive elements the rough outlines through which it may enlarge itself by becoming identified with the larger life of the race. We inherit action-patterns from our animal ancestors which give us the broad outlines our human behavior must assume. We respond to these instinctive tendencies easily. New actions bring quick fatigue. Yet it must not be forgotten that reason and will are just as real elements of experience as instinctive dispositions. Biology is apt to overlook this fact. Nevertheless, individual variation, rational selection, thought, and will must prove their worth in terms of race value. "The individual self must still be regarded as an end and never as a means, as the eighteenth century has forever made clear. But our conception of the individual self must be enlarged to include its organic relations to the family, to the state, and to the race. Only an individual of this type can be an end in himself."